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PICTURES IN STONE.

Thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.
Merchant of Venice.

THE art of working in mosaic is the almost exclusive property of modern Italy, having descended to the skilful artists of Rome and Florence from their ancestors, who adorned in classic time the palaces of the Cæsars, and devoted themselves during the era of early Christian art to the decoration of the cathedral of St Mark. With an amazing patience mastering his passionate southern blood—with a conscientious fidelity that perpetuates to this day the earnest spirit of Giotto and Masaccio—with a steady progressiveness of execution that has come in time to rival the very touches of the flexile brush, the Italian mosaicist has gone on from century to century translating painting into marbles and precious stones, piling up the labour of his unrecorded life upon imperishable tablets, and transmitting with his work and his improvements an inheritance of fresh patience, fresh love, and fresh ambition to his successors.

It has been our good-fortune of late to follow the development of this admirable art throughout all the stages of its progress, from the tessellated pavements and fallen ceilings of the imperial ruins, down to the marvellous reproductions of Titian and Correggio in the papal workshops at the Vatican. Briefly to detail the results of these observations, and to convey at the same time some notion of the laborious method by which pictures in stone are pieced and perfected, is therefore the object of the present paper.

Mosaic art naturally divides itself into three periods—the antique, the medieval, and the modern. Of these, the antique is the boldest and least mannered; the medieval, the most defective and meagre; the modern, both for elaboration of colour and workmanship, the best. The early Roman mosaics are formed of coloured marbles, with an occasional intermingling of burnt clay for the warmest reds. These pieces, or *tessels*, consist of small cubic blocks about the size of dice, and are now and then found to vary in magnitude as the delicacy or vastness of the design may require. Thus the ingenious patterns in giallo, rosso, and verde antico, and the gigantic dragons in black and white marble which are lying open to the air and sun, but still undefaced, amid the ruins of the baths of Caracalla, are but roughly shapen, and exhibit gaping interstices filled up with cement. The famous pavement of the Battle of the Centaurs and Lapithæ, preserved in the circular hall at the Vatican, and the exquisite mosaic of gladiators and animals found at Vermicino, and now laid down in the great hall of

the princely Borghese villa, manifest, on the other hand, a degree of artistic merit, carefulness, and finish, which might almost challenge comparison with some of the modern works at St Peter's, or the medallions that decorate with 'riches fineless' the magnificent aisles of the new basilica of St Paul's beyond the Walls. The heads are full of spirit, the grouping admirable, and the anatomy surprisingly accurate. The latter specimen is especially valuable on account of the costumes introduced, and the particulars of the combat there represented. Lions, tigers, buffaloes, oxen, and even ostriches, are seen to have been the victims of the arena, and some of the men are designated by name in rude mosaic lettering. This work is supposed to date from the third century, and, together with the Battle of Centaurs, and the great pavement of the Athletæ now laid down in a large hall near the Christian Museum at the Lateran, is perhaps the finest and least injured of old Roman mosaics now extant.

With the revival of art in the middle ages, a new sort of mosaic came into fashion, whereof the material was a species of composition, variously coloured, and glazed, to represent enamel. In imitation of the religious pictures of the period, these medieval mosaics were generally relieved by a gilded background, and, being necessarily and at all times harder than painting, exaggerated the defects without exhibiting much of the excellence of the contemporary pictorial art. The famous Navicella, representing St Peter walking on the sea, executed by Giotto in 1293, is probably the finest medieval work of this kind in existence. The mosaics of Cavallini and his contemporaries, as well as those which decorate the vestibules and baptistery of the cathedral of St Mark, are, on the contrary, more curious than beautiful; and, being treated after the stiff and literal manner which has latterly obtained the name of pre-Raphaellesque, occasionally provoke a smile where they are intended to awake devotion. Thus, in an exterior mosaic over one of the doors facing the piazza, we are shewn how the body of St Mark was passed, concealed in a hamper, through the custom-house of Alexandria. The ludicrous anxiety of the Venetian conspirators, and the unmistakable expression of a Mussulman inspector who turns away from the obnoxious basket, with his nose between his thumb and forefinger, tell a tale partaking less of tragedy than comedy, and testifying, at all events, that the smuggled saint had not only died in the 'odour of sanctity,' but continued to exhale it for nearly eight hundred years after his decease. The more modern mosaics, and, above all, that fine one of St Mark, in pontifical robes,

designed by Titian, and executed by the Zuccati, must be excepted from criticism, and allowed to rank with all but the very marvels of recent production. For these, unrivalled as they are in colour, delicacy, and fidelity, we must turn to the magnificent altarpieces, and the no less magnificent, though necessarily coarser decorations of the domes and ceilings of St Peter's. Here, bewildered at first, and unable to believe that they are other than they seem, we find the master-pieces of the renaissance reproduced on every side. Fresh and brilliant are they, as if removed but yesterday from the easel—changed into stone, as before the glance of Medusa—fadeless, perfect, indestructible by aught save fire. Here is the Transfiguration of Raphael, the St Michael of Guido, the St Francis and St Sebastian of Domenichino. Far above, peopling the circuit of the mighty dome, and filling the spandrels of the great arches, we see more mosaics, as delicate, apparently, as those above the altars, but constructed nevertheless upon a scale proportioned to their elevation. The cherubs up there are larger than Gog and Magog, and the pen in the hand of St Mark measures six feet in length.

From St Peter's to the manufactory of mosaics in the Vatican is but a step, and no traveller should leave Rome without having visited it. Much as he may have admired the *chef-d'œuvre* in the neighbouring cathedral, he can form but a poor conception of their value till he has witnessed with his own eyes the toil-some elaboration which they exact at the hands of the artist. It is no trade, this working of pictures in stone, and the mosaicist is no mere plodding mechanic. A refined judgment, an extensive knowledge of art, an eye trained to follow the minutest gradations of colour, and a full appreciation of the various schools, must guide the hand of the patient copyist, who thus invests the master-pieces of all time with something like an earthly immortality. To conquer the enormous difficulties of his profession, the mosaicist must first become, to all intents, an artist; and few who have witnessed the process would be disposed to deny his claim to the title.

The substance from which the enamels are formed is a composition made with lead, iron, zinc, copper, and gold, and subjected to the heat of a furnace. The relative proportions of these metals vary with the colour required to be produced. The shades of colour are developed by a greater or lesser degree of heat. It is a mistake to suppose that these enamels are nothing but opaque pieces of glass; they are purely metallic combinations, harder than stone, undefaceable by weather or time, and only to be affected by the action of fire. All along the great lines of shelves which cover the walls of the vast galleries from top to bottom, sorted in compartments, protected by wirework, like books in a library, and labelled numerically—each number standing for a colour or shade of a colour—are stored the slabs of composition, ready for use. They embrace every conceivable tint, beginning at pure white, and ending with black. Their number is twenty thousand.

'Nature,' we were told, in reply to our surprised inquiry, 'has more than twenty thousand colours. They are not sufficient even for art. We are frequently obliged to temper the enamel in a spirit-lamp, to produce the exact hue we require.'

A man engaged in fitting some tiny morsels for the jagged edges of a rose-leaf, smiled at our remark on the tediousness of the work.

'The labour is nothing,' he said, 'so long as it is followed by success. The artist in mosaic is content if his work be only well done, since that which is well done is done for ever. He is sometimes occupied during ten, fifteen, or twenty years upon one large subject—such, for instance, as the Communion of St Jerome. Sometimes the labour of his whole lifetime suffices

only for the completion of three or four pictures. But what is that? The frescoes of Michael Angelo are not imperishable, and the canvas of the divine Raphael must in time fall in pieces and decay; but the work of the mosaicist is imperishable. His pictures can never fade. The Pyramids of Egypt are not more lasting; and when all the years of his life have been dedicated to the perpetuation of such a work as the Transfiguration, or the St Peter Martyr, he feels, at least, that he has not lived in vain.'

The mosaic-worker was an enthusiast; but enthusiasm is not rare in Rome. We have seen quite unlearned men—soldiers, peasants, mechanics, and the like—standing, as if in a dream, before the great master-pieces of the Vatican, and enjoying them to the full as keenly as the aristocratic amateurs who find their way in for a couple of pauls on the closed days. In the artist, this feeling is necessarily intensified proportionately to his knowledge. Perhaps it would not be going too far to suggest that this very enthusiasm has somewhat to do with the decline of modern art in Italy. The student of promise is sent hither by the heads of the great academy in which he has been trained—he loiters away his three years amid picture-galleries and ruins—he perhaps adds a few rambling sketches to his portfolio—it may be that he copies one or more of the great pictures; not to retain as life-long studies and memorials, but to sell to some suburban convent or chapel, for money to pay his reckoning at the Trattoria di Lepre. These are, too frequently, the only results of his journey. He has admired, but he has not worked. His genius is crushed by the contemplation of an excellence to which he is persuaded human prowess can never attain a second time. By the very generosity of his delight, by the very depth of his artistic faith, he is undone. But this is a digression.

The manufactory of mosaics at the Vatican consists of several long galleries, opening out one after the other, and filled with busy workers. Each artist has a small table to himself, the design standing before him on an easel, a spirit-lamp, and a grindstone. The spirit-lamp, as we have already stated, is of use in the production of minute differences of colour; the grindstone is necessary for the better shaping of the little morsels of enamel, since these, although prepared for him up to a certain size by the workman, can only be curved to the purposes of his subject by the artist himself. We were shewn a box of brown enamels, as first cut by the workman, to be afterwards dealt out to the mosaicists. Some were as large as broad beans; some shaped into little flat sticks; some were mere threads, not much thicker than needles; and others, again, were minute cubes about the size of a pin's head. Great cases are placed here and there along the galleries, filled with models of the tints, to the full number of twenty thousand. These models are shaped and coloured like cakes of water-colour; and arranged in tiny square holes, something like the letters in a compositor's case.

The process of forming the mosaic picture is very curious. A large slab of slaty calcareous stone is prepared for the back or groundwork, and cut away to a depth varying from the sixteenth to three-fourths of an inch, as the scale of the work may require. It is then filled in and levelled down with a soft composition, upon which the artist makes his outline. As he proceeds with his work, he cuts away the composition, and substitutes a thick yellow cement, into which the mosaic fragments are carefully imbedded. In the choice of these, the mosaicist proves himself a true artist. Through all the gradations and evanescent effects of colour, he has no guide but his eye, no resource but infinite patience and judgment. The most valuable paintings are intrusted to him, as they are intrusted to the weavers at the manufactory of

Gobelin tapestries in Paris. In the first room, we were shewn a superb table about to be presented by the pope to Queen Christina of Spain, and a picture destined for the Emperor of the French. The original paintings, from which were executed the mosaics in the vaultings and domes of St Peter's, are all preserved at the manufactory; and the designs for the portraits of the popes at St Paul's beyond the Walls, hang round the rooms. Some notion of the value and delicacy of mosaic portraiture may be conveyed by the fact that, in a portrait of Pope Paul V., the face alone is said to contain no less than one million and a half of pieces.

Pictures in stone—at least those produced at the pope's studios—are not purchaseable with money. They are made only for the pontiff and his palaces, for the basilicas of St Peter and St Paul's beyond the Walls, and for purposes connected with the papal government. Occasionally, some crowned head or eminent noble is so fortunate as to receive one from his holiness; but the honour is exceptional, and seldom conferred upon any but good Catholics. The finest Vatican mosaic ever produced is said to be a copy of Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper, now in the possession of the emperor of Austria. It was executed for Napoleon, when king of Italy, of the same size as the original, cost between L.7000 and L.8000, and occupied ten artists during more than eight years.

Totally different in style and material, but in some cases even more valuable than the Vatican mosaics, are the gem mosaics of Florence. In the former, the colours are artificially produced by a composition of metals; in the latter, only precious stones are employed, and the various tints are formed by a careful adaptation of such gradations as the material affords. Amethyst, jasper, chalcedony, turquoise, yellow topaz, coral, cornelian, agate, lapis lazuli, malachite, alabaster, and rich marbles, are transformed by the skill of the mosaicist into the most admirable and elaborate representations of flowers, fruit, arabesques, and heraldic ornaments. The beautiful brooches of inlaid jaspers which are occasionally to be seen in the cases of our best jewellers, are all from Florentine manufactories; and many persons will doubtless recollect the superb table exhibited by M. Gaetano Bianchini at the Exposition Universelle of Paris in the year 1855.

Being already much interested in the art, and desirous of comparing the process with that of the workers at the Vatican, we devoted a considerable portion of our brief Florentine visit to pilgrimages among the mosaic studios so plentifully scattered throughout that charming city. The most extensive, and perhaps the most famous of all these, belongs to the M. Bianchini just named; and as every studio is but a repetition of every other studio, a rapid *résumé* of what we there were very obligingly told and shewn, will suffice for all the rest. And here be it observed, by way of introduction, that M. Bianchini is not only a mosaic master, but that the energy, liberality, and success with which he has carried on and improved his art, has procured him honours and distinctions for which the noblest and wisest might here labour in vain and for ever.

In the workshops of M. Bianchini, as in the Vatican, each workman has his own bench and table, and works separately. The process is very tedious, requiring the utmost possible nicety of hand and eye, and the tools are very small and delicate. We were shewn files and lapidary-wheels of lilliputian dimensions, and tiny saws like steel threads fitted on a bow. With these, the gems and the *pietro duro*, or stone-ground, are sawn and shaped; for marbles and jaspers being, of course, very expensive when brilliant in colour, are only used in thin veneers, about one-eighth of an inch in thickness.

Every mosaic is first made in a groundwork of soft gray stone, afterwards to be transferred into the *pietro duro*. On this soft stone the outline is carefully

engraved; and as the mosaicist proceeds, he cuts it away without difficulty, and substitutes mastic and precious stones. A little box stands beside him, filled with jewels—looking, by the way, very worthless and dull, but beautiful enough when ground down and polished. When none of these will furnish the exact hue required, it is sometimes possible to produce it artificially. Thus, we were shewn a fine cherry in a group of flowers and fruits, which, having been cut from a piece of amber chalcedony, and exposed to the action of fire, had acquired all the rich and ruddy tones of the natural fruit. Some laurel leaves of a delicately graduated olive-green, were brought, said the workman, from the bed of the Arno—other greens from the neighbouring mountains, from the Low Countries, and from Russia. These mosaics of *pietre commesse*, or mixed stones, are much less elaborate as regards the size of the pieces than those of Rome or Venice; and yet, in consequence of the extreme hardness of the materials, take almost as long to execute. A small white rosebud, we were told, had occupied the mosaicist for an entire fortnight, although each leaf was formed out of a single piece, and there were only twelve pieces in all. A bunch of flowers, somewhat less than the palm of one's hand, was the work of three months.

Even more tedious, and not nearly so interesting, is the preparation of the *pietro duro* into which the mosaic is transferred when done. The *pietro duro* is generally chosen of a dark or black colour, and is very fine, close-grained, and hard. On this, a piece of white paper, delicately traced with the outline of the mosaic, is pasted down. The workman then proceeds to cut away the stone for the reception of the mosaic, leaving the space for every tendril, thorn, petal, or jagged leaf, with an accuracy and patience that is almost inconceivable. When he has finished, it is perfect to a hairbreadth; the mosaic is the same; they fit together with marvellous accuracy; and it only remains for a third workman to unite them with mastic, to set them in a grounding of white cement, and to complete the solidity of the whole by placing a slab of slate at the back. Excepting metal, there is nothing so hard of texture as the *pietro duro*. The point of a pin will make no impression on it, even when rough; and it has to be cut by means of a fine steel wire, and worked down with emery and a wheel. Merely to cut the space for a scroll about three inches in length and one and a half in breadth, had employed one man for more than a week; and to prepare the groundwork for the small bunch of flowers lately named, had taken sixteen days. But the greatest marvel of all awaited us at the table of a workman who was busily joining a mosaic into its groundwork of *pietro duro*. The design represented a basket of flowers surrounded by arabesques. All was completed, with the exception of one tiny hole. This hole was left a little way above a beautiful blush-rose, and was somewhat less than the size of the queen's head on a sixpence.

The master smiled at our expression of curiosity; and the workman, obedient to his glance, took from the box a morsel of mosaic, and fitted it to the hole. It was a tiny butterfly, wrought in emerald green, scarlet, azure, and gold, with purple peacock's eyes on the wings, and dark velvety shadings on the body. It fitted so exactly, even to the thread-like antennae, that it was difficult to believe how space enough could remain for the cement.

The workmen were all young, or in the prime of life. Several among them looked delicate, and some shook their heads sadly when questioned, and confessed that their sight was already slightly impaired. We afterwards learned that the employment was injurious not only to the eyes, but to the general health—that few Florentine mosaicists enjoyed a long tenure of life—

and that the workmen engaged in the grand ducal manufactory are released from labour at sixty years of age, and comfortably pensioned off for the remainder of their lives.

But there are yet other mosaics than these—the basso-relievo mosaics of the Russians, for instance, such as all the world beheld in their famous department at the great exhibition of 1851. By some these are called cameo-mosaics, and we have heard them very aptly described as ‘stone modellings done in relief,’ which perfectly expresses the effect of their raised amethyst grapes, coral cherries, cornelian currants, and pebble plums. A curious, but agreeable, and comparatively inexpensive kind of glass mosaic, has of late been brought before the public. It is very adaptable to household ornamentation, and specimens of it will be remembered by all visitors to the former Crystal Palace. The Hindoos are said, however, to excel all other nations in the minute delicacy and elegance of their *pietro duro* mosaics.

Lastly, we read of a curious and beautiful kind of feather-mosaic work, executed by the ancient Mexicans, long before the period of their subjection by the Spaniards. Clavigero relates in his history that birds of rich plumage were bred for this purpose, and that the feathers sold at high prices in the market according to the brilliancy of their hues. When any great mosaic was proposed, the artists assembled, and divided the work among them, having previously taken every precaution for insuring the correspondence of the various parts, and the ultimate unity of the whole. So exact were they, and so careful, that the mosaicist sometimes passed an entire day in the arrangement of a single feather. His process, though delicate and difficult, was simplicity itself, and consisted only in pasting the feathers upon pieces of cloth, in imitation of the pattern agreed upon.

Enough, however, of mosaics. We have reached the end, or what, in consideration of prescribed usages, must be made the end of our article. Of so interesting and widely diffused an art, one might write a volume—of the associations connected with it, an unlimited number of volumes. Even thus, long trains of pleasant recollections start up around us, and with importunate temptations, strive to arrest our farewell. Once more we lose ourselves gazing upward into the golden glooms of the vaultings of St Mark’s—once more we are gathering violets and wild crocuses amid the mosaic-strewn fields that formed in time past the floorings of hall and corridor in Hadrian’s villa, under the pines of Tivoli—once more we tread the green solitudes of the baths of Caracalla, where the shadows fall solemnly on arch and tower, and the placid evening sunlight slants between. Here are some quiet sheep browsing beside the fallen pillars; yonder lies a huge fragment of vaulted ceiling, overgrown with weeds and brambles, and shewing glimpses of mosaic work between the fluttering leaves. It was amid such sad and lofty scenes we learned to love Pictures in Stone; and we part from them, reader, with a sigh.

KIRKE WEBBE,

THE PRIVATEER CAPTAIN.

CHAPTER VIII.

I HAD been rather stunned than terrified by the calculated malignity of Auguste Le Moine during its elaborate enunciation. The stupid, stereotyped abuse of England—that common staple of continental scribes and spouters effectually muzzled in respect of their own rulers—together with the absurd imputations upon myself, added a feeling of disdain to the astonishment which held me dumb; and even when seized by the rude hands of convivial guests, suddenly transformed by his artful appeal, and the wine they had

swallowed into sanguinary ruffians, I did not realise to its full extent the perilous predicament in which I was placed: very likely, a partly unconscious, and, so to speak, instinctive reliance for effective succour from Webbe, gave me hope and courage. I had seen him leave his place by M. le Maire, and push towards the centre of the room, and although my fascinated gaze, fixed upon the naval ensigne, had not followed his movements, an impression of his near presence and active resolute solicitude must, I doubt not, have remained upon my mind. Webbe was one of those men that, in situations of sudden danger, assume an irresistible ascendancy over others, less, perhaps, by their natural force of character and acquired coolness of demeanour, than by an always more or less empirical assumption of unswerving confidence in their own genius or fortune, backed by the reality or reputation of past successes. It was that aspect of imperturbable superiority that I had seen impose upon the crew of *L’Espigle*, who had confidence in their commander, though none in themselves apart from him. It is not, therefore, surprising that it unconsciously influenced and sustained me during Auguste Le Moine’s denunciation of the English spy, and slayer of *Le Renard*’s unfortunate commander, and the brief, but terrible scene which followed.

Such a superstition could not for a moment support the calm scrutiny of reason; and during the hour or thereabout which elapsed between my breathless arrival at the Lion d’Or, and Captain Renaudin’s appearance there, the folly of relying upon him to effectually shield me from the frightful penalty attached by the law of nations to the crime which, it would appear from young Le Moine’s speech, I had unwittingly committed, was painfully clear to my mind.

Webbe himself was excited—alarmed! He had succeeded in temporarily allaying the storm by solemnly asserting that Auguste Le Moine must have been misled by the casual view he had obtained of my features during a passing gleam of moonlight; that I was really the American he, Renaudin, had represented me to be, or he had himself been grossly deceived.

‘I have promised to produce you before justice,’ added Webbe, ‘should there be a necessity for doing so; I, of course, remaining sole judge of that necessity—a mental reservation which will, it may be hoped, save you from walking in your own funeral procession, preparatory to the unpleasantness of serving as target to a platoon of French tirailleurs.’

‘You talk jauntily, Mr Webbe, of a catastrophe more imminent than you care to admit, and to which your counsel has conducted me.’

‘You do me gross injustice, young sir! Could I foresee the fight off Sereq—your bellicose Quixotism—the escape of Le Moine from Jersey—his presence at the banquet to-day, and recognition of the *Scout* hero amongst the guests? It is, at all events, idle to bandy reproaches or complaints. What is done, is done. The future, not the past, demands earnest and careful consideration. I fear we have not seen the last of Auguste Le Moine.’

‘My own fear! Strange, too, that he should recognise a face which no one but himself could have seen distinctly. It would almost seem to be the work of an avenging Nemesis.’

‘To Old Nick with your Nemesis! There is nothing strange about it. Young Le Moine was wounded and lying upon the deck close by where his uncle fell; and his up-look would have a better view of your features than if he had been standing by your side. Moreover, you were recognised by more than one of the *Scout*’s crew, who, from regard for me, they say, reinforced by a weightier consideration supplied by my son, agreed to keep the secret. They have done so, after a fashion, every man and boy belonging to the brig, being, I

have no doubt, by this time in full possession of the fact—as a profound secret. Little, however, will Harry reck of that so long as he continues to shine a bright particular star in Maria Wilson's eyes. But this is foolish dallying with precious moments,' added Webbe. 'We have not, I repeat, seen the last of Auguste Le Moine, unless we can manage to throw him out of the hunt, and that, stanch blood-hound as he seems to be, will not, I think, be so difficult. *L'Espiegle* sails to-night at about twelve o'clock: she will creep round the French coast towards Havre de Grace, and you and I embark in her.'

'Havre de Grace!' I exclaimed with emotion; 'then I shall soon see my mother—father.'

'Not soon, Master Linwood. It is not impulsive, inconstant effort, but firm, patient endurance of the bloody spur, that will enable you to win the goal. When you embrace your mother, it must be with her husband's lost character, his renewed life in your hand. You should not wish it to be earlier.'

'You touch the right chord with a skilful finger, Captain Webbe. What, then, do you mean by embarking for Havre de Grace?'

'I mean that *L'Espiegle* will sail ostensibly for that port. You and I shall be put on shore to-night near Granville, whence we shall leave by diligence for St Malo. Le Moine will be off at once, there can be no doubt, across country for Havre de Grace, where he will arrive much earlier than *L'Espiegle* possibly could, even supposing she did not, as she certainly will, put in at Cherbourg. By the time Le Moine has been able to ascertain, and act upon that fact, *L'Espiegle* will have again spread her white bosom to the gale; whither to wing her flight, upon what particular errand bound, will depend upon the providence that shapes the ends of privateers—the chance, namely, of a good prize. Meanwhile, William Linwood, seizing Time by the only lock that swiftly speeding potentate is said to wear, will have seen sweet Clémence de Bonneville—ascertained beyond question that she is truly the lost child of Mrs Waller—have reciprocated sympathies, confidences, sighs, wishes, hopes, vows with that most charming of damsels, and, aided by the bold privateer, have flown with her, and the blessings to you and yours, which make up her priceless dowry, to England, whence a bird of the air shall carry the glad tidings to the pining yet hopeful souls prisoned in France—hopeful because confident in the devotion of their son!'

'One word, Captain Webbe, if you please. You know that quince is a great improvement to apple-pie; but that apple-pie *all* quince is'—

'A different thing altogether,' interrupted Webbe, with a gay laugh. 'True, true! The illustration is only less pertinent than venerable. In plain phrase, then, I believe that by the course I have indicated, we shall successfully dodge friend Le Moine till our little affair is concluded, adversely or happily, as fortune may determine; and your suspicious interesting self is safely restored to Great Britain and your grandmother.—Ah, friend Cocquard!' he added quickly, 'you bring a message for me.'

'It is true, Monsieur le Capitaine,' replied the landlord of the Lion d'Or; 'and one that presses. I am enjoined to say that Monsieur Le Moine, who made so deplorable a mistake at the banquet, has ridden off on horseback, to invoke the aid of the military commandant. Fortunately,' added Cocquard, 'the commandant's domicile is full two leagues distant from Avranches; and Auguste Le Moine, it has been ascertained, did not finally determine upon seeking his intervention till about ten minutes since.'

'Thank you, my friend. Two leagues! He will not do that in much less than an hour; and should he find the commandant at home, another must elapse before they are here. Bah! it is nothing, after all.

Plenty of time yet, friend Cocquard, to take a bottle of your best wine, and settle your little account, both of which you will please to favour us with immediately.'

'With pleasure, Captain Renaudin.'

'It will be touch and go,' said Webbe, after the door had closed upon the complacent landlord: 'I am used to this sort of thing; yet I could have wished that—'

Vi-ve le vin,

Vi-ve ce ju divin,'

he added, breaking into the refrain of a drinking song, as Cocquard reappeared with the wine. 'Do you know, friend Cocquard'—for whom he poured out a bumper—'do you know, friend Cocquard,' continued the privateer captain, 'that I consider it a bad compliment on the part of Enseigne Le Moine to doubt the word of a man who, as you know, Admiral Ducos testified, has deserved well of France.'

'Parbleu, Monsieur le Capitaine— Your health, messieurs. Parbleu, that it is a bad compliment! But what can one expect of a young giddy-brain without a sou except his pay! He is, besides, a Bonapartist *enragé*, which, between ourselves, will not, in a few weeks more or less, be a title of honour. I must, however, hasten to furnish monsieur with the little memorandum he has asked for.'

'There is no instinct finer than that,' laughingly exclaimed Webbe, 'which prompts rats to quit a doomed ship. Bonaparte is done for, you may be sure! Seriously,' he added, 'there is no doubt whatever that that stupendous downcome cannot be long delayed. Well, the foundering of the empire will, I hope, afford me a plank of safety; to you, also, it may prove of service.'

'For Heaven's sake, in what way?'

'Why, of course, by ridding you of Le Moine's persecution; if it should happen that he has not caught and settled you by court-martial before then! The "Restoration" will not shoot English spies, employed to act against the Usurper, as I find many persons are already beginning to call Napoleon, though as yet under their breath.'

'Is it not folly, then, rather than wise resolution based upon mature counsel, to proceed to St Malo, before that now imminent Restoration is an accomplished fact?'

'Clémence, meanwhile, being married to Jacques Sicard, and all hope, consequently, of winning over that ingenuous damsel to our side, passed away for ever! I think I told you before that the nearness of the event which will open France to the English is a chief element in Louise Féron's calculation.—Ah, here is the little memorandum: good! Take another glass, friend Cocquard, whilst my young friend I and disburse the amount.'

'Much obliged, messieurs,' said friend Cocquard, as he gathered up the money, which, having pouched, he added: 'If I might presume to advise Captain Jules Renaudin, I should say no time ought to be lost in gaining the shelter of *L'Espiegle*. Revenge, whether for real or fancied injuries, is swift of foot.'

'Quite true, my friend. But revenge, take my word for it, will not be swift of foot enough this time, to put salt upon our tails. I expect Baptiste to call about this time,' added Webbe; 'the instant he does so, please send him to me.'

Cocquard said he would, took affectionate leave of Captain Renaudin, and left the apartment.

'That is a deuced queer way for a landlord to take leave of a guest!' I remarked.

'Yes, especially to our insular notions. Cocquard, you must understand, has, like Monsieur le Maire, a share in *L'Espiegle*. We are therefore united in much stricter bonds than the embrace which so surprised you. Your portmanteau,' continued Webbe, looking at his watch, 'is, I know, in readiness. Swiftly

the moments pass. It is now just upon half-past eleven, and Le Moine, accompanied, I have no doubt, by the commandant—that worthy soldier being anything but a friend of mine—must be now about upon his return. Baptiste will, however, be here in a very few minutes.

'But why incur unnecessary risk by remaining here an instant longer?'

'I remain here so long, simply because I would not incur unnecessary risk. You do not, I hope, Linwood, deem me such a fool as to court danger for the mere purpose of braving it! I wish to give time for the streets to clear of the excited banquet-guests and their friends, who, when I came in, were discussing the for and against of Le Moine's accusation, in numerous groups, and with a decided leaning, I could hear plainly enough, to believe him rather than me. Numbers give confidence; and spite of Captain Jules Renaudin's reputation for daring, and a general belief that the crew of *L'Espiegle* would back him in anything, they might, had we attempted to walk down the street towards the landing-place, even half an hour ago, have made an effort to arrest us—you, certainly. La Grande Rue,' added Webbe, after an anxious look out of window, 'is much clearer, but even now— Ah, Baptiste, you are here at last, then!'

'To the exact moment, Captain Renaudin; it is precisely half-past eleven.'

'It is very well. Are the boat's crew placed as I directed?'

'Yes; but if I might take the liberty of offering an opinion, it would be prudent to gain the landing-steps by the narrow street to which we may pass from the back of the Lion d'Or.'

'Bah! Why, that is the way to the Corps de Garde!'

'Pardonnez. The way to the Corps de Garde is along La Grande Rue.'

'That is your opinion, Baptiste; but on a moonlit night like this, I see further and more clearly than you do. Now, then, take the portmanteau Monsieur Cocquard will give you, and walk with it openly, deliberately, *le front levé*, down that same Grande Rue. We shall follow close behind.'

'Linwood,' said Webbe, 'do as I do: take a cigar, and smoke it as we walk along. We must shew no sign of fear or hesitation: to do so would be as fatal as following Baptiste's advice, which would have insured our immediate arrest. A bold, confident front will be our best safeguard. In case of the worst, we must, with the aid of a score of my brave *Espiegles*, who have been carefully distributed to that end, fight our way to the boat as we best may. Come along!'

Courage begets courage, and I walked down the steep, ill-paved street, and past groups of sullen, observant men—awaiting, it seemed, the return of Le Moine with the commandant—whose scowling visages were distinctly visible in the cold, bright moonlight, with more of real, as well as simulated coolness than I had hoped for. The assumption of easy, careless confidence by Webbe was consummate, as acting, and, it was plain, imposed much more upon the suspicious, menacing, but irresolute lookers-on, than his sailors, who, scattered here and there, picked each other up, as it were, as we passed along, and without apparent purpose, formed at last a respectable flank-guard.

Nevertheless, the bayonets of the Corps de Garde, past which lay our way, though we were on the opposite side of the street, disquieted, I could perceive, even Webbe, and, to my utter astonishment, he coolly crossed over, taking me with him, shook hands with the officer there, and having ascertained that he had no commands for Havre de Grace, bade him a friendly farewell, and we went on our way slowly, deliberately, as before.

For a while, that is to say, for I cannot deny that

our pace was perceptibly accelerated as we neared the boat, and became conscious, without looking back, that the crowd was gathering thickly behind, and beginning to lash themselves into action by cries of '*Traître!*' '*Expion!*' '*Chien d'Anglais!*' and the like holiday and lady terms.

The head of the narrow landing-steps being at last reached, Webbe faced abruptly about, confronting, and for a moment silencing the angry crowd, passing me at the same instant down the steps. The boat's crew quickly followed, then Webbe suddenly turned, and scarcely touching the steps, it seemed, sprang into the boat, which as instantly shoved off, amidst a roar of rage from the mob, who appeared to have, at one and the same moment, arrived at a conviction that it was their right and duty to arrest the supposed spy and traitor, and of the impossibility of doing so.

With what a tumultuous throb the checked, fluttering pulse renewed its beatings as the consciousness of safety rushed, as in a flood of glowing rapture, through every artery and vein! That safety was absolute. The commandant, with 20,000 men, could not have stayed the progress of our boat towards *L'Espiegle*, and the fine breeze blowing would carry that vessel herself in less than half an hour beyond range of the best telescope in Avanches!

'That walk, Linwood,' remarked Webbe, coming aft, and taking charge of the tiller, 'was more trying to the nerves than a battle.'

'Much more so, as far as my slight experience of battle goes. One fear troubled me,' I added, 'which you do not appear to have entertained. It was, that your French crew might not have been to be depended upon, in such a case, to act against Frenchmen.'

'Fiddlestick! My gallant *Espiegles* are cosmopolites, whose *patrie* is the whole earth, with especial regard, however, to that portion thereof likely to furnish them with the most comfortable berths. An expansive idea that, don't you think?'

'Expansive humbug, you mean!'

'No, I don't. You may not have a soul above bunting, but these fellows have. Above consideration, I mean, of the mode in which blue, white, and red, or any other coloured bunting, may be arranged; whether diagonally, as in St George's cross, or in three perpendicular strips, as in the tricolor. I have before observed, Linwood, that you are a person of limited geographical ideas.'

'Stuff! Rubbish! At all events, you yourself must be a person of very limited geographical ideas, or you would not the other day have so long hesitated at firing upon St George's ensign, as to place your own life in peril!'

'Weakness, my young friend—human weakness! He is a good divine, remarks the lady in the play, who follows his own teaching. Most extraordinarily good I should say, an example of the kind never having come under my observation. By the by, Linwood,' added Webbe, 'I will tell you, some of these days, when we have a leisure half-hour to ourselves, how it happened, that I became Captain Jules Renaudin: you will find that, strictly speaking, I had no choice but to exchange for that name the one in which my godfathers and godmothers, simple souls! promised and vowed I should renounce the devil and all his works—Peak oars! The boat has way enough!'

In two minutes, we were upon the deck of *L'Espiegle*; and three hours afterwards, I, Captain Renaudin, and Baptiste had been landed upon the French coast above half a league eastward of Granville, and but a short distance from a cottage in which, when at home, Baptiste lived with his wife, a sharp, black-eyed Granvillaise.

Before leaving by diligence on the third day from our landing, I was metamorphosed into Jean Le Gros, a French youth, of Gravelines in the Pas de Calais,

travelling with his uncle, Jacques Le Gros, also of Gravelines, upon affairs of business. Webbe, who had wonderful talent in such matters, pronounced the transformation to be complete; and positively, when I at last obtained a full view of myself, cased in a puce-red redingote, bright yellow pantaloons, and a blue-silk waistcoat, the general effect, aided by astoundingly manipulated hair, and two round gold earrings, which, after much persuasion, I had submitted to be bored for—the ensemble forming, it appeared, the gala dress, in those days, of young Pas de Calais—I was fit to choke with laughter—partly the laughter of mirth, partly of vexation!

'This is a charming dress to go a courting in,' I snarled, addressing Webbe. 'Very charming, upon my word!'

'O yes, it is indeed charming!' exclaimed Madame Baptiste, supposing, no doubt, that she echoed me. 'Monsieur has now quite a distinguished air.'

I thought the woman was poking fun at me; but no, she was serious as a judge. Her husband, evidently intending the highest compliment possible to human speech, declared I was completely *Français*; and Webbe assured me I looked remarkably well.

I resigned myself; and Messieurs Jacques and Jean Le Gros reached by due course of diligence—about three miles an hour, exclusive of stoppages—the dingy, dirty city of St Malo, and took up their quarters in the Hôtel de l'Empire.

Webbe, I must state in explanation, was, he informed me, known to but very few persons in St Malo as Captain Renaudin, and those few, fast friends upon whose silence he could depend; and it being absolutely necessary to baffle young Le Moine, the last change of name and disguise was extemporised. I had feared there would be a difficulty with respect to passports; but they were found to be perfectly *en règle*; a seeming justification of Webbe's frequent remark that, as a police regulation, the passport-system was the greatest humbug ever devised. It is, however, possible that the confusion into which the public business had everywhere fallen, facilitated the procurement, by Baptiste, of the requisite papers.

Webbe left the hotel on the following morning, soon after breakfast, and did not return till near four in the afternoon. He was in high spirits. Madame de Bonneville had left home for Paris only two days previously, and on the morrow we twain were to dine, by special invitation, with the charming Clémence, and Fanchette.

'The game, or I err greatly, is in your own hands,' said Webbe. 'Clémence—Lucy, that is to say—already sees—thanks to certain hints of mine—the glories of a *milady* about to descend upon her. But the table-d'hôte dinner-bell has already rung twice. After we have dined, I shall have more to say and shew. Adieu.'

The privateer captain sat long at table, and drank freely—his custom always when there was no peril of seas or land to guard against; but at last we were alone; and after much rigmarole preface, designed to convince me of the loyalty of his motives, he drew from his pocket-book a much-worn printed bill, and was about to place it in my hands, when M. Jacques Sicard was announced; and without pausing an instant for permission, in bounced that gentleman, evidently in a high state of inflammation.

Rather a good-looking, intelligent young fellow, let me break off a moment to say, spite of his round bullet head and stout barrel-like body, inadequately supported by legs that were well enough of themselves, though not quite equal to the situation, a deficiency which I more than suspected had been artificially increased within the previous hour.

'I present myself *sans façon*, messieurs,' he began, 'as it is my right to do, when coming to demand

explanation, satisfaction, justice; which explanation, satisfaction, justice, you will refuse me at your peril!'

'What does the man mean?' I asked Webbe.

'I know no more than you. He appears to be tipsy, or'—

'Speak French, will you?' interrupted Sicard, striking the table with his doubled fist. 'Do you suppose a Frenchman, who has been educated in Paris, and lived there all his life till within the last three years, can understand that gibberish?'

'You are insolent, Jacques Sicard,' remarked Webbe.

'No; it is you, Jacques Le Gros, that are insolent, in speaking before me in a *patois* I do not comprehend. It may be Bas-Breton for what I know or care: assuredly, it is not French.'

'Well, what have you to say? Why are you here?'

'What have I to say? Why am I here?' explosively retorted Sicard. 'O Dieu de la miséricorde, as if your own conscience, if you have one, does not tell you what I must have to say—why I am here! Well, then, I have to say you are a— But I restrain myself; I resolved to do so when finally deciding to seek you here. Jacques Sicard, *mon garçon*, I said to myself, be moderate, be wise! Thou hast had provocation enough to exasperate a saint; nevertheless, be moderate, be wise. Thou art a tradesman, established three years, prospering and well respected; it is thy duty, therefore, to set an example to others. I shall do so; and therefore I do not say what you are, Monsieur Jacques Le Gros; but as to why I am here, I beg to say, I am here to obtain explanation, satisfaction, justice; and if not justice, vengeance—vengeance! Jacques Le Gros,' he added, grinding his teeth and rolling his eyes, after a most formidable fashion.

Webbe laughed, mockingly, as few but he could. Jacques Sicard danced, gesticulated, screamed with rage.

'I am a Frenchman,' he shrieked. 'My heart, my blood, is French—French! Do you understand?'

'Perfectly! You are a French boot and shoemaker!'

I interposed. The poor fellow seemed almost demented with passion, and I was anxious to hear what he had to say.

'Calm yourself, Monsieur Sicard,' I said; 'neither my uncle nor myself wishes to insult, distress you.'

'A la bonne heure!' said Sicard, subsiding into comparative moderation, and wiping his beady forehead, as he sat down. 'That is polite, that is reasonable, and good French, moreover, though the accent is detestably provincial—guttural in the extreme.'

'We are from near Calais; and as the English long held possession of that town, they may have left their accent behind as a souvenir,' said Webbe.

'I have nothing to say to you,' retorted Sicard; 'I shall talk to your nephew only. This,' continued the excited bootmaker, 'is the case in a few words. Not many months ago, I was upon the best terms with my relatives, the De Bonneville. Madame de Bonneville had a sincere regard for me; and I—I—why should I not confess it?—I loved, adored her only child and daughter, la charmante Clémence, who—'

'Who in return,' interrupted Webbe, 'loved, adored le charmant Jacques Sicard, bottier de Paris.'

'I shall not talk to you, old rogue!' replied Sicard with rekindling fury. 'No, that is wrong; I withdraw "old rogue;" but I shall only address your nephew. I have no pretension,' he resumed, 'to say Clémence loved me in return; but at least she permitted me to accompany her to church; sometimes, with madame's permission, to a walk on the ramparts when the bands were playing. In fine, I was well satisfied with the progress of the affair, till one fine day I find Monsieur Jacques Le Gros chatting to her in the magasin. Once or twice afterwards I witnessed the same thing, but it did not trouble me. I did not even ask the man's

name. Why should it trouble me that Clémence sometimes conversed with an ugly old rogue? Ah, wrong again! I withdraw "rogue," but not old and ugly, which is exact, demonstrable. I repeat, it did not trouble me to find Clémence conversing more than once with an old, ugly—monsieur. Ha! I little knew what a venomous serpent was whispering at the ear of my 'Eve! I shall not withdraw that! It is exact, demonstrable! Clémence was no longer the same; the poor child's head was turned. She no longer discerns any merit in Jacques Sicard; and is ever dreaming of riches, grandeur, castles in Spain without number. Well, that malady of the brain yields slowly to time and the remonstrances of myself and Madame de Bonneville: Clémence recovers her charming spirits; again recognises the devotion of Jacques Sicard. Madame de Bonneville sets out for Paris, and I make an appointment to call on Clémence this very evening, and escort her and Fanchette to the theatre. I am happy, joyous even. I dress myself with care—it may be admitted with some taste—and I proceed to the Rue Dupetit Thouars. Ha! I am spurned, derided! I hear from Fanchette that that old, ugly rogue—that venomous serpent—I withdraw nothing!—continued Sicard, springing to his feet again in a fresh access of rage, and emphasising with his fist upon the table—'not even rogue; that that old rogue and serpent, whose name I hear for the first time, has been there again! I understand, of course, that I have been calumniated, supplanted! and I come here for explanation!—satisfaction!—justice!—vengeance!'

Bang, bang, bang! I thought he would have smashed the table. Instead of that, the resounding blows brought two waiters into the room.

'Have the goodness to turn this drunken rascal out of our apartment,' said Webbe.

'Drunk! drunk!—I—I,' ejaculated the poor fellow, vainly struggling in the throttling gripe of the waiters, 'I—I am Ja-a-cques Si—Sicard, a respect—respectable!'

'Bottier de Paris,' suggested Webbe.

'And I—I will have sat—satisfaction! justice!—'

The door closed upon his struggles, and I thought we were quit of him. Not so: escaping by a sudden effort from his captors, he darted back, partially opened the door, shewed us his flaming face, and shaking his clenched fist, exclaimed: 'And vengeance!—scélérats!—vengeance!'

He was re-seized, and this time effectually got rid of.

A WOMAN'S THOUGHTS ABOUT WOMEN.

GOSSIP.

ONE of the wisest and best among our English ethical writers, the author of *Companions of my Solitude*, says, apropos of gossip, that one half of the evil-speaking of the world arises, not from *malice prepense*, but from mere want of amusement. And I think we may even grant that in the other half, constituted small of mind or selfish in disposition, it is seldom worse than the natural falling back from large abstract interests, which they cannot understand, upon those which they can—alas! only the narrow, commonplace, and personal.

Yet they mean no harm; are often under the delusion that they both mean and do a great deal of good, take a benevolent watch over their fellow-creatures, and so forth. They would not say an untrue word, or do an unkind action—not they! The most barefaced slanderer always tells her story with a good motive, or thinks she does; begins with a harmless 'bit of gossip,' just to pass the time away—the time which hangs so heavy! and ends by becoming the most arrant and mischievous tale-bearer under the sun.

Ex. gratia—Let me put on record the decline and fall, voluntarily confessed, of two friends of mine,

certainly the last persons likely to take to tittle-tattle; being neither young nor elderly; on the whole, perhaps rather 'bright' than stupid; having plenty to do and to think of—too much, indeed, since they came on an enforced holiday out of that vortex in which London whirls her professional classes round and round, year by year, till at last often nothing but a handful of dry bones is cast on shore. They came to lodge at the village of—X—, let me call it, as being an 'unknown quantity,' which the reader will vainly attempt to find out, since it is just like some hundred other villages—has its church and rector, great house and squire, doctor and lawyer (alas! poor village, I fear its *two* doctors and *two* lawyers); also its small select society, where everybody knows everybody—that is, their affairs; for themselves, one half the parish resolutely declines 'knowing' the other half—sometimes pretermittently, sometimes permanently. Of course, not a single soul would have ventured to know Bob and Maria—as I shall call the strangers—had they not brought an introduction to one family, under the shelter of whose respectability they meekly placed their own. A very worthy family it was, which shewed them all hospitality, asked them to tea continually, and there, in the shadow of the pleasant drawing-room, which overlooked the street, indoctrinated them into all the mysteries of X—, something in this wise:

'Dear me! there's Mrs Smith; she has on that identical yellow bonnet which has been so long in Miss Miffin's shop-window. Got it cheap, no doubt: Mr Smith does keep the poor thing so close! Annabella, child, make haste; just tell me whether that isn't the same young man who called on the Joneses three times last week! Red whiskers and moustaches. One of those horrid officers, no doubt. My dear Miss Maria, I never do like to say a word against my neighbours; but before I would let my Annabella go about like the Jones' girls— Bless my life! there's that cab at the corner house again—and her husband out! Well, if I ever could have believed it, even of silly, flirty Mrs Green! whom people do say old Mr Green married out of a London hosier's where he went in to buy a pair of gloves. What a shocking place London must be— But I beg your pardon, my dear'— And so on, and so on.

This, slightly varied, was the stock conversation, which seemed amply sufficient to fill the minds and hours of the whole family, and, indeed, of every family at X— likewise.

Maria and Bob used to go home laughing, and thanking their stars that they *did* live in that shocking place London. Bob made harmless jokes at the expense of the unconscious household who,

Pinnaced dim in the intense inane,

could drop down, hawk-like, upon reputations, bonnets, and beaus. Maria gave vent to a majestic but indignant pity; and both hugged themselves in the belief that never, under any circumstances, could they sink to such a dead-level of vacuity, spite, and folly.

Weeks passed—rather slowly, especially when, of autumn evenings, they found themselves *minus* books, piano, theatre, concerts, society—in fact, in precisely the position of the inhabitants of X— all year round. So, as daylight was less dull than candlelight, they used to rise at unearthly hours; dine—shall I betray the Goths?—at 11.30 A.M., take tea at 4 P.M., and go to bed as soon after dark as they could for shame. At last, from very dullness, Maria got into the habit of sitting at the window and telling Bob what was passing in the street, interspersed with little illustrative anecdotes she had caught up 'just as bits of human nature.' One, the stock scandal of the place, interested them both so much, that they watched for the heroine's carriage every day for a week; and when at last Maria cried: 'There it is!' Bob jumped up with all

the eagerness of Annabella herself, and missing the sight, retired grumbling: 'What nonsense! I declare you're getting just as bad a gossip as anybody here!' (N.B.—The masculine mind, in an accusative form, always prefers the second person of the verb.)

'Well,' observed Maria, 'shall I give up telling you any news I happen to hear?'

'O no! You may tell what you like. As the man said when his wife beat him—it amuses you, and it doesn't harm me.'

Finally—I have it from Maria's own confession—coming in one afternoon absorbed in cogitations as to what possible motive Mrs Green could have in telling Miss Elizabeth Jones she wished to call on her, Maria; and what on earth would be done if Annabella, whose mamma wouldn't allow her even to bow to Mrs Green, should happen to call at the same time—she was quite startled by Bob's springing up from the sofa to meet her, with an air of great relief.

'So you're back at last. Well, who did you see, and what did they say to you? Do sit down, and let's hear all the gossip going.'

'Gossip!' And meeting one another's eyes, they both burst into a hearty fit of laughter, declaring they never again would pride themselves on being a bit better than their neighbours.

Ay, fatal and vile as her progeny may be, 'the mother of mischief,' says the proverb, 'is no bigger than a midge's wing.' Nay, as many a vice can be traced back to an exaggerated virtue, this hateful propensity to tittle-tattle springs from the same peculiarity which, rightly guided, constitutes womanhood's chiefest strength and charm; blesses many a worthless man with a poor fond, faithful wife, who loves him for nothing that he is or does, but merely because he is *himself*; forgives to many a scapegrace son or brother a hundred sins, and follows him to the grave or the scaffold, blind to everything except the fact that he is her own. Personal interests, personal attachments, personal prejudices, are, whether we own it or not, the ruling bias of us women: it is better to own it at once, govern, correct, and modify it, than to deny it in name, and betray it in every circumstance of our lives.

Men, whose habits of thought and action are at once more selfish and less personal than ours, are very seldom given to gossiping. They will take a vast interest in the misgovernment of India, or the ill cooking of their own dinners; but any topic betwixt these two—such as the mismanagement of their neighbour's house, or the extravagance of their partner's wife—is a matter of very minor importance. They 'canna be fashed' with trifles that don't immediately concern themselves. It is the women—always the women—who poke about with undefended farthing candles in the choke-damp passages of this dangerous world; who put their feeble ignorant hands to the Archimedean lever that, slight as it seems, can shake society to its lowest foundations. For, though it irks me to wound with strong language the delicate sensibilities of my silver-tongued sisters, I would just remind them of what they may hear, certainly one Sunday in the year, concerning that same dainty little member, which is said to be 'a fire, a world of iniquity . . . and it is set on fire of hell.'

Verily, the 'Silent Woman'—a lady without a head, who officiates as sign to many a country inn—had need to be so depicted. But it is not 'the gift of the gab,' the habit of using a dozen words where one would answer the purpose, which may arise from want of education, nervousness, or surplus but honest energy and earnest feeling—it is not that which does the harm; it is the lamentable fact, that whether from a superabundance of the imaginative faculty, carelessness of phrase, or a readiness to jump at conclusions, and represent facts not as they are, but as they appear to the representers, very few women are absolutely

and invariably veracious. Men lie wilfully, deliberately, on principle, as it were; but women quite involuntarily. Nay, they would start with horror from the bare thought of such a thing. They love truth in their hearts, and yet—and yet—they are constantly giving to things a slight colouring cast by their own individuality; twisting facts a little, a very little, according as their tastes, affections, or convenience indicate: never perhaps telling a direct lie, but merely a deformed or prevaricated truth.

And this makes the fatal danger of gossip. If all people spoke the absolute truth about their neighbours, or held their tongues, which is always a possible alternative, it would not so much matter. At the worst, there would be a few periodical social thunder-storms, and then the air would be clear. But the generality of people do *not* speak the truth: they speak what they see, or think, or believe, or wish. Few observant characters can have lived long in the world without learning to receive every fact communicated second-hand with *reservations*—reservations that do not necessarily stamp the communicator as a liar, but merely make allowance for certain inevitable variations, like the variations of the compass, which every circumnavigator must calculate upon as a natural necessity.

Thus, Miss A., in the weary small-talk of a morning-call, not quite knowing what she says, or glad to say anything for the sake of talking, lets drop to Mrs B. that she heard Mrs C. say: 'She should take care to keep her boys out of the way of the little Bs'—a very harmless remark, since, when it was uttered, the little Bs were just recovering from the measles. But Miss A., an absent sort of woman, repeats it three months afterwards, forgetting all about the measles; indeed, she has persuaded herself that it referred to the rudeness of the B. lads, who are her own private terror, and she thinks it may probably do some good to give their over-indulgent mamma a hint on the subject. Mrs B., too well-bred to reply more than 'Indeed!' is yet mortally offended; declines the next dinner-party at the Cs, and confides her private reason for doing so to Miss D., a good-natured chatter-box, who, with the laudable intention of getting to the bottom of the matter, and reconciling the belligerents, immediately communicates the same. 'What have I done!' exclaims the hapless Mrs C. 'I never said any such thing!' 'Oh, but Miss A. protests she *heard* you say it.' Again Mrs C. warily denies; which denial goes back directly to Miss A. and Mrs B., imparting to both them and Miss D. a very unpleasant feeling as to the lady's veracity. A few days after, thinking it over, she suddenly recollects that she really did say the identical words, with reference solely to the measles; bursts into a hearty fit of laughter, and congratulates herself that it is all right. But not so: the mountain cannot so quickly shrink into its original mole-hill. Mrs B., whose weak point is her children, receives the explanation with considerable dignity and reserve; is 'sorry that Mrs C. should have troubled herself about such a trifle;' shakes hands, and professes herself quite satisfied. Nevertheless, in her own inmost mind, she thinks—and her countenance shews it—'I believe you said it, for all that.' A slight coolness ensues, which everybody notices, discusses, and gives a separate version of; all which versions somehow or other come to the ears of the parties concerned, who, without clearly knowing why, feel vexed and aggrieved each at the other. The end of it all is a total estrangement.

Is not a little episode like this at the root of nearly all the family feuds, lost friendships, 'cut' acquaintanceships, so pitifully rife in the world? Rarely any great matter, a point of principle or a violated pledge, an act of justice or dishonesty; it is almost always some petty action misinterpreted, some idle word repeated—or a succession of both these, gathering and

gathering like the shingle on a sea-beach, something fresh being left behind by every day's tide. Not the men's doing—the fathers, husbands, or brothers, who have no time to bother themselves about such trifles, and who, if they see fit to quarrel over their two grand causes *belli*, religion and politics, generally do it out-right, and either abuse one another like pickpockets in newspaper columns, or, in revenge for any moral posching on one another's property, take a horsewhip or a pair of pistols, and so end the matter.

No. It is the women who are at the bottom of it all, who, in the narrowness or blankness of their daily lives, are glad to catch at any straw of interest—especially the unmarried, the idle, the rich, and the childless. As says the author I have before referred to: 'People not otherwise ill-natured are pleased with the misfortunes of their neighbours, solely because it gives them something to think about, something to talk about. They imagine how the principal actors and sufferers will bear it; what they will do; how they will look; and so the dull bystander forms a sort of drama for himself.'

And what a drama! Such a petty plot—such small heroes and heroines—such a harmless villain! When we think of the contemptible nothings that form the daily scandal-dish of most villages, towns, cities, or communities, and then look up at the starry heaven which overshines them all, dropping its rain upon the just and the unjust—or look abroad on the world, of whose wide interests, miseries, joys, duties, they form such an infinitesimal part, one is tempted to blush for one's species. Strange, that while hundreds and thousands in this Britain have not a crust to eat, Mrs E. should become the town's talk for three days, because, owing a dinner-party to the Ps, Gs, Hs, and Js, she clears accounts at a cheaper rate by giving a general tea-party instead. 'So mean! and with Mr E.'s large income too!'—That, while millions are living and dying without God in the world, despising Him, forgetting Him, or never having even heard His name, Miss K., a really exemplary woman, should not only refuse, even for charitable purposes, to associate with the Ls, an equally irreproachable family as to morals and benevolence, but should actually forbid her district poor to receive their teaching or their Bibles, because they refuse to add thereto the Church of England Catechism. As to visiting them—'Quite impossible; they are dissenters, you know.'

The gossip of opposing religionism—I will not even call it religion, though religion itself is often very far from pure 'godliness'—is at once the most virulent and the saddest phase of the disease; and our sex, it must be confessed, are the more liable to it, especially in the provinces. There, the parish curate may at times be seen walking with the Unitarian or Independent minister, if they happen to be well-educated young men of a social turn; even the rector, worthy man! will occasionally have the sense to join with other worthy men of every denomination in matters of local improvement. But oh! the talk that this gives rise to among the female population! till the reverend objects of it—who in their daily duties have usually more to do with women than with men—another involuntary tribute to those virtues which form the bright under-side of every fault that can be alleged against us—are often driven to give in to the force of public opinion, to that incessant babble of silvery waters which wears through the rockiest soil.

The next grand source of gossip—and this, too, curiously indicates how true must be the instinct of womanhood, even in its lowest forms so evidently a corruption from the highest—is love, and, with or without that preliminary, matrimony. What on earth should we do if we had no matches to make, or mar; no 'unfortunate attachments' to shake our heads over; no flirtations to speculate about and comment upon

with knowing smiles; no engagements 'on' or 'off' to speak our minds about, nosing out every little circumstance, and ferreting our game to their very hole, as if all their affairs, their hopes, trials, faults, or wrongs, were being transacted for our own private and peculiar entertainment! Of all forms of gossip—I speak of mere gossip, as distinguished from the carrion-crow and dunghill-fly system of scandal-mongering—this little-tattle about love-affairs is the most general, the most odious, and the most dangerous.

Every one of us must have known within our own experience many an instance of dawning loves checked, unhappy loves made cruelly public, happy loves imbibed, warm, honest loves turned cold, by this horrible system of gossiping about young or unmarried people—'evening' to one another folk who have not the slightest mutual inclination, or if they had, such an idea put into their heads would effectually smother it; setting down every harmless free liking as 'a case,' or 'a flirtation;' and if anything 'serious' does turn up, pouncing on it, hunting it down, and never letting it go till dismembered and ground to the bone. Should it ever come to a marriage—and the wonder is, considering all these things, that any love-affair ever does come to that climax at all, or that any honest-hearted, delicate-minded young people ever have the courage to indulge the world by an open attachment or engagement—heavens and earth! how it is talked about! How one learns every single item of what 'he' said, and 'she' said, and what all the relations said, and how it came about, and how it never would have come about at all but for So-and-so, and what they have to live upon, and how capable or incapable they are of living upon it, and how very much better both parties would have done if they had only each left the choosing of the other to about four-and-twenty anxious friends, all of which were quite certain the affianced pair never would suit one another, but would have exactly suited somebody else, &c., &c., *ad libitum* and *ad infinitum*.

Many women, otherwise kindly and generous, have in this matter no more consideration towards their own sex or the other, no more sense of the sanctity and silence due to the relation between them, than if the divinely instituted bond of marriage were no higher or purer than the natural instincts of the beasts that perish. It is most sad, nay, it is sickening, to see the way in which, from the age of fourteen upwards, a young woman, on this one subject of her possible or probable matrimonial arrangements, is quizzed, talked over, commented upon, advised, condoled with, lectured, interrogated—until, if she has happily never had cause to blush for herself, not a week passes that she does not blush for her sex, out of utter contempt, disgust, and indignation.

Surely all right-minded women ought to set their faces resolutely against this desecration of feelings, to maintain the sanctity of which is the only preservative of our influence—that is, our rightful and holy influence, over men. Not that, after the school of Meadames Barbauld, Hannah More, and other excellent but exceedingly prosy personages, love should be exorcised out of young women's lives and conversations—query, if possible?—but let it be treated of delicately, earnestly, rationally, as a matter which, if they have any business with at all, is undoubtedly the most serious business of their lives. There can be—there ought to be—no medium course; a love-affair is either sober earnest or contemptible folly, if not wickedness; to gossip about it is, in the first instance, intrusive, unkind, or dangerous; in the second, simply silly. Practical people may choose between the two alternatives.

Gossip, public, private, social—to fight against it either by word or pen seems, after all, like fighting with shadows. Everybody laughs at it, protests

against it, blames and despises it; yet everybody does it, or at least encourages others in it: so innocently, unconsciously, in such a small, harmless fashion—yet, we do it. We must talk about something, and it is not all of us who can find a rational topic of conversation, or discuss it when found. Many, too, who in their hearts hate the very thought of tattle and tale-bearing, are shy of lifting up their voices against it, lest they should be ridiculed for Quixotism, or thought to set themselves up as more virtuous than their neighbours; others, like our lamented friends, Maria and Bob, from mere idleness and indifference, long kept hovering over the unclean stream, at last drop into it, and are drifted away by it. Where does it land them? Ay, where?

If I, or any one, were to unfold on this subject only our own experience and observation—not a tittle more—what a volume it would make! Families set by the ears, parents against children, brothers against brothers—not to mention brothers and sisters in law, who seem generally to assume, with the legal title, the legal right of interminably squabbling. Friendships sundered, betrothals broken, marriages annulled—in the spirit, at least, while in the letter kept outwardly, to be a daily torment, temptation, and despair. Acquaintances that would otherwise have maintained a safe and not unkindly indifference, forced into absolute dislike—originating how they know not; but there it is. Old companions, that would have borne each other's little foibles, have forgiven and forgotten little annoyances, and kept up an honest affection till death, driven, at last, into open rupture, or frozen into a coldness more hopeless still, which no after-warmth will ever have power to thaw.

Truly, from the smallest Little Peddlington that carries on, year by year, its bloodless wars, its harmless scandals, its daily chronicle of interminable nothings, to the great metropolitan world, fashionable, intellectual, noble, or royal, the blight and curse of social and civilised life is gossip.

How is it to be removed? How are scores of well-meaning women, who, in their hearts, really like and respect one another—who, did trouble come to any one of them, would be ready with countless mutual kindnesses, small and great, and among whom the sudden advent of death would subdue every idle tongue to honest praise, and silence, at once and for ever, every bitter word against the neighbour departed—how are they to be taught to be every day as generous, considerate, liberal-minded—in short, womanly, as they would assuredly be in any exceptional day of adversity? How are they to be made to feel the littleness, the ineffably pitiful littleness, of raking up and criticising every slight peculiarity of manner, habits, temper, character, word, action, motive—household, children, servants, living, furniture, and dress: thus constituting themselves the amateur rag-pickers, *chiffonnieres*—I was going to say scavengers—but they do not leave the streets clean—of all the blind alleys and foul by-ways of society, while the whole world lies free and open before them, to do their work and choose their innocent pleasure therein—this busy, bright, beautiful world?

Such a revolution is, I doubt, quite hopeless on this side paradise. But every woman has it in her power personally to withstand the spread of this great plague of tongues, since it lies within her own volition what she will do with her own.

All the king's horses and all the king's men

cannot make us either use or bridle that little member. It is our never-failing weapon, double-edged, delicate, bright, keen; a weapon not necessarily either lethal or vile, but taking its character solely from the manner in which we use it.

First, let every one of us cultivate, in every word

that issues from her mouth, absolute truth. I say cultivate, because to very few people—as may be noticed of most young children—does truth, this rigid, literal veracity, come by nature. To many, even who love it and prize it dearly in others, it comes only after the self-control, watchfulness, and bitter experience of years. Let no one, conscious of needing this care, be afraid to begin it from the very beginning; or in her daily life and conversation fear to confess: 'Stay, I said a little more than I meant'—'I think I was not quite correct about such a thing'—'Thus it was; at least, thus it seemed to me personally;' &c., &c. Even in the simplest, most everyday statements, we cannot be too guarded or too exact. The 'hundred cats' that the little lad saw 'fighting on our back-wall,' and which afterwards dwindled down to 'our cat and another,' is a case in point, not near so foolish as it seems.

'Believe only half of what you see, and nothing that you hear,' is a cynical saying, and yet less bitter than at first appears. It does not argue that human nature is false, but simply that it is—human nature. How can any created being with its two eyes, two ears, one judgment, and one brain—all more or less limited in their apprehensions of things external, and biased by a thousand internal impressions, purely individual—how can it possibly decide on even the plainest actions of another, to say nothing of the words, which may have gone through half-a-dozen different translations and modifications, or the motives, which can only be known to the Omniscient Himself?

In His name, therefore, let us 'judge not, that we be not judged.' Let us be 'quick to hear, slow to speak;' slowest of all to speak any evil, or to listen to it, about any body. The good we need be less careful over; we are not likely ever to hear too much of that.

'But,' say some—very excellent people too—'are we never to open our mouths?—never to mention the ill things we see or hear; never to stand up for the right, by proclaiming, or by warning and testifying against the wrong?'

Against wrong—in the abstract, yes; but against individuals—doubtful. All the gossip in the world, or the dread of it, will never turn one domestic tyrant into a decent husband or father; one light woman into a matron leal and wise. Do your neighbour good by all means in your power, moral as well as physical—by kindness, by patience, by unflinching resistance against every outward evil—by the silent preaching of your own contrary life. But if the only good you can do him is by talking at him or about him—nay, even to him, if it be in a self-satisfied super-virtuous style—such as I earnestly hope the present writer is not doing—you had much better leave him alone. If he be foolish, soon or late, he will reap the fruit of his folly; if wicked, be sure his sin will find him out. If he has wronged you, you will neither lessen the wrong nor increase his repentance, by parading it. And if—since there are two sides to every subject, and it takes two to make a quarrel—you have wronged him, surely you will not right him or yourself by abusing him. In Heaven's name, let him alone.

MAUNA LOA AT WORK.

VULSURIUS is very well in its way. When really in earnest, it affords a pretty sight for our lady and gentlemen tourists, who transport their knapsacks or carpet-bags to the Bay of Naples to see it, and makes the trouble of the holiday excursion well worth taking; but he who wanders over the world of waters that rolls between Asia and America, demands something greater and grander: and he finds it. In the very middle of the lone Pacific, Mauna Loa raises her august brow to the height of nearly 14,000 feet; and, when the fit is on her, flings a glare over the ocean

from a column of fire 1000 feet high, and spouts forth a torrent of lava, several miles in breadth, that burns up forests and jungles in its winding way, and drinks dry the swamps and streams to an extent of nearly seventy miles.

The last eruption commenced in August 1855, and was still in full blast about the same time last year. It is described in letters by Mr F. A. Weld to Sir Charles Lyell, and the Rev. Titus Coan to the British Consul-general for the Sandwich Islands, both read at the Geological Society last December.

On the 11th of August 1855, a small point of light was observed on the summit of Mauna Loa. This is one of the three volcanic mountains of the island of Hawaii, in the Sandwich group. It appears, like the others, smooth and rounded when viewed from a distance, standing almost in the centre of the island, and rising from the sea-coast through every diversity of country in a gradual ascent of about forty miles. The little point of light was seen from Hilo, a town in Byron's Bay, and won the eye from the beautiful expanse between, with its picturesque ravines filled with banana, bread-fruit, and candlenut trees, and cutting through grassy slopes dotted here and there with small coffee and sugar plantations, till the region of comparative fertility met the dark forests that clothed the middle of the mountain. The star on the summit grew more and more brilliant as the people gazed; then it rose and expanded by degrees, filling the whole heavens with its ominous glare. The eruption, however, was not distinguished by any remarkable projection of burning substances into the air, but by a vast and steady discharge of lava, the fiery floods of which burst from the summit, and rushed down the side with appalling fury. The main torrent first directed itself into the valley between Mauna Loa and one of its sisters, Mauna Kea, and then, taking an easterly direction, flowed over forests, jungles, swamps, and streams, towards Hilo, widening, as it advanced, from a breadth of three miles to five or six, and the depth varying from ten to several hundred feet. 'Our first good view,' says Mr Weld, 'of the eruption was at night, from the deck of a ship in the harbour, as trees obstructed the view from the shore. The distant craters were scarcely visible, but the burning forests above Hilo shewed the front of the advancing lava, lighting up the night with a mighty glare, with sometimes a column of red light shooting up, occasioned probably by an explosion of the half-cooled upper crust of lava, or by dried trees falling into the devouring element.' The rapidity of the ponderous fluid, however, must not be judged by that of water. Although it rushed down the steep of the mountain with incalculable speed, it is not mentioned that in the more level country it made much greater progress than a mile in the week; but still, day after day, it filled the air with smoke, darkening the entire horizon, and converting into a desert vast tracts till then waving with fruits, and adorned with all the glory of tropical verdure.

Both Mr Weld and Mr Coan visited the scene of the outbreak, the latter giving also an account of the appearance of the lava-stream at its terminus, not more than fifteen miles from Hilo. To gain this point through the jungle, and over the bed of a river, while the rain poured down in torrents, was a work of difficulty; but on the evening of the second day, he came suddenly upon the burning lava, consuming the thickest before him for a breadth of several miles, and gleaming with innumerable fires. The party halted under a tree within a few feet of the lava-stream, the heat of which they made use of to boil their tea, and keep them warm 'through the long and stormy, but intensely interesting night. The pyrotechnical scene was indescribable: standing under our tree, we could survey an area of some fifteen square miles, over which countless fires were gleaming with extreme brilliancy. The jungle

was burning, and trees were falling; the rending of the rocks, the detonation of gases, clouds of steam from boiling water, and scintillations from burning leaves filled the atmosphere; and the red glare above resembled a firmament on fire. During the night, we were nearly surrounded by the advancing lava, and when we decamped in the morning, we left our sheltering tree in flames.'

Mr Weld's journey to the top of the mountain was broken by a visit to the crater of Kilauea, much lower down, the lava-torrent from which, a few years ago, burst into the sea at more than thirty miles' distance, forming several islands, and heating the waters, and killing the fish, in an area of many miles. The crater of Kilauea is seven miles in circumference, and about 1500 feet deep.* The cliffs forming its outer lip form a nearly perpendicular wall of yellowish clay and dark basalt rock. The bottom of the crater is constantly changing; and frequently it holds in the lower hollow a lake of molten lava a mile long, and half a mile broad. On the present occasion, it was a plain, more or less broken, of lead-coloured lava, dotted with small mounds and craters, giving forth clouds of smoke, and, as night approached, kindling up here and there into fires.

The ascent from hence to the summit was through woods, over old lava-streams, by the mouths of large caverns, and heaps of stones to mark where travellers had perished. They lay down for the night on some half-vitrified ashes; being at such an elevation that the next morning when they tried to make some tea, the water, although it boiled readily, did not attain heat enough. That day the view of the opposite mountain of Mauna Kea was remarkably fine. 'The old conical craters on its summit covered with newly fallen snow, its huge outline shadowy and dim, the clouds of smoke that rose round its base from the valley down which the present flood of lava is flowing, the wild dreariness of the foreground, and the tropical sky above, formed a scene almost indescribably grand and wonderful.' On arriving at the lava of the present eruption, they were able to trace its devastating course below. It had been partially cooled on the surface, so as to admit of their walking on it, though with some difficulty and danger, as the flood of liquid fire still continued to roll under the crust. Of this flood, Mr Weld obtained a view through a broken part of the surface. 'The huge arch and roof of the cavern glowed red-hot, and, as with some difficulty I obtained a point directly overhanging it, the glare was perfectly scorching. The lava, at almost a white heat, flowed slowly down at the rate of about three or four miles an hour. I dropped a fragment of rock into it, which it carried floating on. There was something very impressive in its steady, smooth onward course.'

The eruption came from two craters, one a mile lower than the other. In the lower, the upper crust of the lava had cooled, and the discharge was subterranean; although the smoke, darkness, and sulphureous stench continued to make it an object of awe. The upper crater still sent up those volumes of red smoke and partially ignited gases which at night appeared a lofty column of flame. Having commenced their return—

'Our sleeping-place was about 500 feet below the level of the craters: the night was fine with us; but, whilst above us the craters rolled up dark columns of smoke, below, over Hilo and Kilauea, raged a magnificent thunder-storm. The level of the top of the clouds was somewhat below us, and along it played flashes of the most vivid lightning, whilst the thunder-peals seemed to roll up from the valley below. Later in the night it rained, and in the morning,

* On the island of Maui, there is the crater of an extinct volcano, said to be twenty-four miles in circumference.

though in the tropics, the exterior of the fur-rug in which I slept was white with hoar-frost.*

In Mr Coan's journey to the summit, he walked along the lava-stream for some distance, where it appeared to be five or six miles broad; then observing a narrower place, he crossed to its opposite bank. 'At this point the whole surface of the lava was solidified, while the molten flood moved on below like water under ice in a river. The superficial crust of the lava was crackling with heat and emitting mineral gases at innumerable points. Along the margin, numerous trees lay crushed, half-charred, and smouldering upon the hardened lava.'

That night, they slept on the cooled lava, above the line of vegetation. The next day, 'upward and upward we urged our weary way upon the heated roof of the lava, passing, as we ascended, opening after opening, through which we looked upon the igneous river as it rushed down its vitrified duct at the rate of forty miles an hour. The lava-current at this high point on the mount was fearful, the heat incandescent, and the dynamic force wonderful. The fire-duct was laid from 25 to 100 feet deep down the sides of the mount; and the occasional openings through the arches or superincumbent strata were from 1 to 40 fathoms in diameter. Into these orifices we cast large stones, which, as soon as they struck the surface of the hurrying flood, passed down the stream in an indistinct and instantaneous blaze. Through openings in the mountain we could also see subterranean cataracts of molten rock leaping precipices of 25 or 50 feet. The whole scene was awful, defying description. Struggling upwards amidst hills, cones, ridges, pits, and ravines of jagged and smoking lava, we came at 1 p.m. to the terminal or summit crater, and, mounting to the highest crest of its banks, we looked down as into the very throat of hell.' This, according to Mr Coan, is the summit of the mountain, while Mr Weld places the highest crater 1500 feet below the summit. The former indeed met with nothing at all like what is commonly called a crater. The plateau of the mountain was rent with yawning fissures, bordered with masses of scorie, lava, &c., 'piled in the form of elongated cones, rent longitudinally, while the inner walls were hung with burning stalactites, and festooned with a capillary or filamentous lava, called *Pelé's hair*, and much resembling the hair of a human being.' The burning lava is not seen at this point—it goes off by a subterranean chamber: 'but the fearful rush of white smoke and gases from these fissures on the summit fills one with awe, and the spectator must use his utmost care lest the fierce whirlwinds which gyrate and sweep over these heated regions throw him over, or strangle him with sulphureous gases.' It is not wonderful that the natives consider the hair, hung in so extraordinary a situation, to belong to the goddess *Pelé*. It is 'reddish, brownish, or of golden hue'—in fact, auburn; and the beautiful but awful being it adorned lost the fragments in her wild gambols as she rioted in her volcano-bath during the night, splashing the liquid fire to the heavens, and flinging its fitful glare over the sea.

We may add, that the immense crater of Kilauea was in full work in 1840, when the flood of lava 'forced itself under its mural sides at the depth of 1000 feet, pursuing its way towards the sea in subterranean galleries, until the fiery flood broke ground, and rolled down in a burning deluge, from one to four miles wide, sweeping away forest and hamlet, and filling the heavens with its murky clouds and its lurid glare. In three days it reached the sea, having travelled thirty miles; and for two weeks it plunged in a vast fiery cataract, a mile wide, over a precipice some fifty feet high. The commotion, the detonations, the rolling and gyrating clouds of ascending vapour were awfully sublime. The ocean was heated for

twenty miles along the coast, and thousands of marine animals were killed.'

Such is Mauna Kea when the fit is on her!

PASSING THROUGH BALTIMORE AND NEW YORK.*

June 1, 1857.

BALTIMORE is a place of little interest to a stranger; it is, however, the first slave-town I have been in. Being on the borders of the free states, it is only half a slave-state, the slaves enjoying comparative freedom. There I saw for the first time a black man walking with a white woman. It is against the law in all slave-states, and almost never seen in the free. They may not marry either.

I found an agreeable companion in a Frenchman, a bookseller from Mobile; he walked with me about the town, and told me many things of interest. He says that the blacks are better off in the slave than in the free states, and I believe it. 'They always get two or three weeks' holidays in the year, and often go travelling through the free states, with a pass-ticket from their masters. I met several myself. Many of them in towns become wealthy, and refuse to purchase themselves, preferring to remain slaves! The southerner told me that, two years ago, a black man came and set up a barber's shop in Mobile, and became very popular. After a while, it oozed out that he lived with a white wife; he was immediately taken up, sent to the penitentiary for five years, and his wife ordered to quit the state. Black men (free) are allowed to travel through any state, but not to settle in them, in the south, at any rate.

At nine o'clock this morning, 'I took the cars for Washington.' The scenery is very similar to that on the New York line, only with this exception, that from every rock there did not issue the information, in staring white letters, that 'Phalon's Paphian Liquid is the best Cosmetic.' Thus nature becomes subservient to art, and *vice versa*. How the sylphs must hate the noxious fluid; but there are no fairies here—elves, goblins, sprites hold no moonlight revels here. Barnum would have caged and shewn them in pantaloons and tights!

Over 'Thomas's' Viaduct, and past the immortal man's monument; some fifty people fishing in the river below, catching enormous jack-sharps; and then on through the woods again, the banks covered with beautiful blue lupines, and the magnolias glittering like snow-flakes on the trees.

Arrived in Washington, the chief city of this great country; we drive, the southern and myself, to Kirkwood's Hotel. Hotels are a great institution; everything in America is an 'institution'—mint-juleps, corn-cakes, and steam-boats: this is another. If you go into a shop and ask: 'Have you any so-and-so?'—they reply: 'We hain't got anything else;' meaning to inform you that their chief business is in that article, that it receives their particular attention; and perhaps, after all, they haven't got it.

As soon as we reached our hotel, we saw that there was a great crowd, and were told that there was an election of councilmen going on. A lot of 'roughs' from Baltimore were said to be getting up a disturbance. The polling-booth was right opposite us, and there seemed to be a great deal of excitement. I had stepped into the bar, to write my name and secure a room, when bang—bang—bang went some firearms. I thought it was rejoicing, but saw a fellow cutting up the street, and another after him with a *six-shooter*, as they call them, which he fired slap at his back, without

* What follows is really, as it appears, an extract from the carelessly written memoranda of a young sojourner in the United States.

stopping him, however. The amusement—excitement rather—now became general. About twenty shots were fired, and Mr Kirkwood closed the bar of the hotel by putting the shutters to.

Presently the Baltimoreans cleared off—about a dozen ruffians, as villainous a looking set as I ever saw. Nobody was hurt, and I began to doubt whether the pistols were loaded with ball. An American remarked to me that the practice was very bad. I thought he meant the practice of using revolvers, and said 'Shameful!' He turned round, stared, and then added: 'I guess, if I shoot at a man, I hit him! I don't run when I shoot.' 'No,' said another, 'you shoot, and then run.' (General laugh.) Distant shots were heard about town. The city was in an uproar. Report came in that the mayor had asked the president for a guard of marines.

I drove away to see the Capitol. It is a fine white marble building, commandingly situated on the top of the hill, surrounded with pretty parks and gardens, which they are enlarging and improving. The centre hall is circular, very dirty, and with a roof that leaks badly; the walls hung round with fine paintings: 'Landing of Columbus, 1492'—a very fine painting (it is difficult to believe that this country was discovered only about 400 years ago, or so); 'Embarkation of Pilgrims from Delfthaven, 1620'—also very fine; small portrait of Daniel Webster—rough-looking old boy; 'Surrender of Lord Cornwallis'; 'Franklin trying to persuade Louis XVI. to acknowledge the Independence of the United States,' by Healy—a magnificent picture; 'Baptism of Pocahontas, an Indian Girl'—very beautiful; 'Discovery of the Mississippi River by De Soto'—the finest of all. Nothing else worth seeing. Everything dingy and dirty. As we drove out, we passed the marines—fine soldierlike fellows in light blue. Just then ran past those aforesaid ruffians, dragging a small brass cannon by a long rope, yelling, and calling them to come and take it. I remarked the hair of the fourteen presidents to be gray, with the exception of that of James Monroe and General Pierce—the latter lank, black, scoundrelly looking stuff. All sorts of curiosities are kept here: a Chinaman's tail cut off by a Yankee mate, who caught him shouting! no other reason being assigned for presenting it to the National Gallery; calf with two heads; Feejee idols (anything but handsome), and other *lucus nature*. A splendid collection of shells, finer than that in the British Museum, but in sad disorder. Looking out of one of the windows, saw a young man carried past wounded. Did not feel much inclined for, but went home to dinner. As I was standing on the steps of the hotel, a man passed by, whom Mr Kirkwood addressed in the following manner: 'Charlie, any shootin' up your way?' 'I guess so; regular fraction!' A little crowd gathered to hear his account of the fight, of which you shall have as much as I can remember.

No. 1 *loqr.*: 'They got a small cannon, and took possession of the market, loading it with scraps of iron and bits of glass. They then turned it towards the precinct (polling-booth), and kept away the voters. Well, there was plenty of shootin', and then the marines came up, headed by Captain Tyler, a young man. So one fellow shot a marine through the wrist, and he fell. Then the marines fired and charged bayonets.'—No. 2: 'How many fell?'—No. 1 (laughing): 'I fancy I was round the corner pretty quick whenever I heard the "Make ready, purr-sent." But they said five or six were down. One chap fell dead just beside me, at least *he was going when I came off*. They captured the gun.'—No. 3: 'How many killed, did you say?'—No. 1: 'Oh, six killed, I believe.'—No. 3: 'Thank God.'—*Omnes*: 'Amen!'

Citizen No. 3 is then heard in favour of peace and order. I must just give you a specimen as follows: 'What a set of gaw-dem rascals these Baltimore fellows is; 'aif we hadn't enough of gaw-dem blackguards in

Washinton without importing them. Tell you what I'd do—I'd shoot every one of them, as soon as he shewed a *weepa*, &c. These seemed to be the general sentiments of the respectable portion of the community present, and were received with applause. The captain, for such he was, volunteered to do for one man if others would do the like. All professed their willingness to serve the cause of peace and justice.—No. 1 then continued his statement thus: 'The worst of it is, that they haven't shot one Baltimore feller. But there's an officer of the Land-office dead!'—No. 2: 'Ah, that's a pity.'—No. 5 (evidently a hanger-on of state): 'Never mind; some one else will get that: they'll fill up the appointment to-morrow.'—No. 1: 'There was a little girl shot, down an avenue, by mistake. She was dying.'—*Chorus*: 'Ah, that's the worst of these rows, they always shoot the wrong people.'—Citizen No. 6, rather a sententious, prosy old fellow, perceiving that I was a stranger, drew me aside and began: 'This is a bad time to be here. We never have any fights here *mostly*, except at the general elections; but these Baltimore fellows will come down here. This is a free country, you know, and every man goes where he likes—that is, he is at liberty to do as he pleases—that is a— Yes, at the Baltimore election there were 160 killed—that is, shot each other—died, you know. Now, there was that young man in the Land-office—I knew him quite well—that is, I was acquainted with his appearance. I was aware he was a most respectable character—no one more so, as far as I know; at least, I may say he was as respectable as any one almost. Well, he was shot—fired at, wounded in the stomach, abdomen—just here, you know—and death came on, happened, occurred, *supervened*. Well, perhaps, he was only looking on; but I daresay he was one of the leaders. But it's all over now—that is, finished, quite quiet again—put down, you know, quelled—that is a— Just then a buggy drove up, with a white-headed old man in it, wounded in the arm, not seriously, however, but covered with blood. He was looking out of his window when shot. His name was Colonel Williams, I believe.

I go up to my room and open the window. The heavens are one sheet of fire; sullen *soughs* of wind through the trees announce a storm; one mighty peal of thunder, and then the battle of the elements begins. Rain it is not to be called. Cataracts roaring, and lightning flashing, it seems as if the wrath of Heaven was aroused at this bloody scene. Half an hour, and all is still; faint gleams of lightning are dying in the west; but these demons are at work again, shouting and yelling, and piling up a great bonfire right in the middle of the street, opposite my window. Old tables, boxes, chests of drawers, are pressed into the service. A circular war-dance, a song with revolver accompaniment, finishes the proceeding; and all is still, with now and then an occasional shot or yell. It is impossible to say whether these shots are blank or not, but I suspect the real fighting is over for to-day. I enclose a newspaper account of the shooting, lest you should think I am *Arrowsmithing*. Now for an hour or two of sleep. Adieu!

OUR LIGHT CONTRIBUTOR UPON DEODORISATION.

I HAVE lately been staying with a friend who is what he calls a practical chemist. He has, indeed, none of those large globular bottles in his window—the red, white, and blue which are the insignia of the pharmaceutical craft—because he is a clergyman, and his bishop, very properly, would not permit such an illumination. He is also obliged to confine the public offer of his soothing mixtures to that one day of the week

whereon his pulpit opens; and if he were detected in issuing 'quietness' at any other time, he would be punished. But he is not the less a practical chemist for all that.

He knows what to avoid a great deal better than what to eat and to drink, for upon these two latter points he is a second Dr Hassell, and describes all food to be noxious that is not downright deadly. Breakfast, according to him, undermines the constitution, dinner shakes it to its foundations, and supper, with pickles, brings it down with a run. What is one man's meat is another man's poison, says the proverb; but with my friend the P. C., his meat and his poison are one and the same thing. When I took my bitter beer—which, by the by, was his—and which I, of course, imbibed very willingly as often as I could get it, he was wont to say that I reminded him for once of Socrates in the act of partaking of the hemlock, with the difference that it was my ignorance, but the philosopher's intrepidity, which made us both so careless of the result. He used to name that amber liquid in its tapering glass 'with beaded bubbles winking at its brim,' by some Latin name, as if in exorcism, and to ascribe to it 'a volatile odorous principle, a greenish fixed oil, a free organic acid, uncrystallised sugar, colouring matter and gum;' but a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, said I, and I called it 'Bass,' and drank it all the same; else if I had been less like Sancho Panza, he would have played the very Dr Pedro with me. His own house, which is much too good a one for such a purpose, he makes the theatre of all sorts of scientific experiments. Ventilation is there so perfected, that it seems to me the wind bloweth pretty much where it listeth, and drainage is in full flow. Above the drawing-room fireplace, just where one leans one's elbows upon the mantelpiece to enjoy one's self in the glass, and just where the unprotected small of one's back occurs when we stand with our coat-tails over our arms and our rear to the fire, there comes breeze enough, through a great iron mouth, to turn a mill. 'The principle of the thing, my dear sir,' he has said about a hundred times, 'is as follows . . . ' and then he is the encyclopædia vice the pharmacopœia, resigned for a little while. I think he wishes to persuade me that the air comes somehow through the fire, and so enters the room both fresh and warm; but if that is the case, why does it *feel* cold, and why do I get sore throat, or else lumbago, according as I present myself to the orifice frontways or the reverse? Sometimes a current of air would set in while we were at dinner—escaped from some north-pole contrivances of his down stairs—fit to carry our legs away, and then he would try to convince me it was all right, by reference to his thermometer; as if an instrument of that kind would ever persuade me out of a goosey sensation in the calves, and of a stagnation in my feet. But his strongest point, perhaps, is, or was, home-drainage. At one time, the great attraction he used to promise me, if I would only come and see him, was the perfection of his system of arterial domestic sewage: he said that it was positively beautiful; and, indeed, he was always pulling up the floors of his back kitchen and scullery, like some conscience-stricken Maria Manning, to investigate it. 'I would not mind going down into the coal-hole, would I? That's right; and I should be rewarded for it, that I might depend upon; the system was quite unique, and the principle was as follows . . . ' It was very cold work standing in the kitchen, on account of the proximity of the north-pole apparatus; and I really thought that the pretty waiting-maid would never have brought a light; neither she nor the cook could anyhow get the candle to burn; and if it kindled, it was at once put out again. At last we got our dip, and went down into the coal-cellar.

'The main pipe,' pursued the P. C., in a sort of high-pitched lecture-room voice, 'you will presently perceive to be rather more than six feet long, with a diameter of— Bless my soul, what's this?' cried he, coming down suddenly to the tone of ordinary astonishment. 'What are you doing here, fellow?'—addressing himself to a very tall young man, who was vainly endeavouring to conceal himself upon an extremely limited space. 'Robbers! thieves! Who are you?'

'Please, sir, I'm only Mary's cousin; but she thought you might not like to see me in the kitchen, and so put me into this here coal-hole, out of the way.'

'The main pipe,' quoth I oratorically, as we went up stairs together after this, 'is, as you have just perceived, rather more than six feet long, with a diameter depending upon the amount of cold meat and vegetables bestowed on him by the cook;' and that was the first remark which I remember to have ever made to my friend the practical chemist which he was neither able nor willing to controvert.

There was nothing more said about domestic drainage from that period; but my scientific friend has since taken up the public health, with all his old enthusiasm, instead, and thrown himself, so to speak, into the local sewage of his town. It is needless to state that he has attempted to drag me in with him also, and indeed not without success. I agreed to accompany him in a visit to the works which have been established for deodorising the sewage of Jennyville—containing 65,000 inhabitants—including all the refuse from its manufactories, and for converting the same into dry and solid manure. A private company has undertaken this business; but if that were not the case, fair Jennyville would be now compelled by act of parliament to do this dirty work herself. Our path lay beside the river and canal, which I have always considered to be the very foulest in all England, and most certainly there was great improvement there. To say that they were clear and sparkling, would be an absurd compliment to waters upon which the sun but rarely shines, and over which the smoke-clouds hang like a perpetual pall; but I declare they were positively pellucid to what they had been wont to be; while the fishes—of which I had never before seen more than one solitary poisoned tadpole floating bottom upwards—crossed and recrossed one another in the wholesome depths like lightning; and the cattle on the banks, which had been used to prefer any turbid puddle to these their native streams, were drinking for drinking's sake like lords or aldermen. It had been my former custom when passing along this way to hold my nose; but there was no occasion for this now, and I confined myself to holding my tongue and listening to the practical chemist. 'The ordinary quantity of sewage,' said he, with the lecture-room voice again, 'that is collected, pumped, and deodorised per diem in these works, is about three millions of gallons, or thirteen thousand five hundred tons; and the dry solid manure extracted is about eleven tons daily, being at the rate of about one solid ton to every twelve hundred tons, or to two hundred and twenty-four thousand gallons of common liquid manure.'

Presently, we were inside the great gates, and heard them locked behind us. We entered a mighty room, beautifully clean, wherein two spotless engines were panting and toiling like mad, and two more very oily-looking ones, doing nothing, were regarding them with aristocratic contempt. These former were pumping up at one and the same time the town sewage, and a mixture of lime and water—the great deodoriser—into one common pipe. From that moment, there ceases to be any odour from the surface, and surprisingly little even from the deposit itself.

Another engine, elsewhere, was employed in turning sundry agitators—who must have had as dirty a job on their hands as any of their political brethren—which mingled still more completely this agreeable compound, that flowed afterwards into an enormous open tank with sloping sides, in an apartment resembling a large swimming-room. The liquid was not of a pleasant hue just then—although, from the various dyes in use at the Jennyville factories, it assumes, in turn, half the colours in the rainbow—but there was no perceptible smell whatever. These innumerable gallons of abomination, then, had been already rendered innocuous. Iron gratings, on the way between the works and the town, arrest the progress of all heavy substances, so that the engines may not be injured (in flood-time, after heavy rains, there is, for the same reason, an escape-pipe, through which the surplus sewage can be carried off), and the contents of this tank are liquid, except at the bottom; there, there is a sort of endless screw, which worms away the thick deposit into channels which are provided for it below. These, again, communicate with a quantity of double-wire cylinders, the inner ones of which, revolving at a speed of nearly 1200 revolutions a minute, expel, by the centrifugal force, the water from this wet, pulpy sewage, through sides of perforated zinc; out of these, the thick, rich mud is presently scooped, moulded into bricks, and set to dry. Each weighs about half as much as the common brick, and is sold to the farmer for manure, at twenty-five shillings a ton. Its appearance much resembles that of mortar, without any stronger smell; and it has a quantity of hair about it—from the wool-factories—which is said to be particularly fertilising.* So much, then, for the manufactured sewage, the part of the business which, it is to be hoped, will in time defray the expenses of the rest. The manure is found to be itself of great value, and to be of service beyond a single crop, but to be much improved by a slight mixture with something of a more exciting character, such as guano.

But there remains still a little to be said upon a subject of much greater importance than mere money gain—namely, upon the enormous advantage which these works have conferred upon the public health of Jennyville. A chamber adjoining the swimming-room before mentioned, receives in a second reservoir, through more perforated zinc, the filterings of the first tank; there is no screw required here, as the deposit is of course so much less solid; but every two or three months the place is emptied and scooped out by hand. From the upper part of this second tank, the sewage of Jennyville flows down, colourless, wholesome, deodorised, into the river beneath. I was so interested and so pleased, that I permitted my practical chemist to give me a little to drink out of a great glass which is placed for that purpose by the side of this eternal spring, and it really was not so bad; a slight flavour of tar in it, I don't know from what cause, was all that I was able to detect. Our toast—and water—was 'the Health of Jennyville.' The consequences of that draught being so palatable are at present—as the P. C. would say—'the following,' the proofs of which are exhibited in the returns of the Registrar-general. There have been 95 deaths per quarter in the town less than the average of the corresponding quarters in the two years previous to the establishment of the works, or 380 lives per annum saved. A distinguished sanitary authority has estimated the lost labour, cost of sickness, and funerals, &c., &c., consequent upon that sacrifice of life, as not less in money-value than sixty pounds a

head; and he writes, 'apart from the consideration of humanity, and of the moral consequences of so great a saving of human life, I feel sure that the gain to the inhabitants of Jennyville, if the present conditions can be maintained—of which there appears to be no reasonable doubt—should not be estimated at less than L.20,000 per annum; which, I think, for my part, is pretty well for deodorisation.'

HAUNTING SPIRITS.

It was an olden fancy, born
Of some delirium of the brain,
That parted spirits stray forlorn
Back to our earth again.
O fiction false!—O idle creed!
Theirs is the rest, and ours the need.

They walk in glory, God their guide;
We haunt them, but they dream it not:
Around their path our footsteps glide
Whose fall they have forgot.
The arch that spans their heavenly spheres
Is but the rainbow from our tears.

Thou who didst leave me in my youth,
They say thou comest back to me,
A phantom shape of love and truth
The gifted eye may see:
But well I deem this is not so,
Where thou hast gone, 'tis mine to go.

If mortals do in sooth behold
Such vision in my lonely land
Whose desolation is untold,
It must be that I stand
With mine own spirit face to face,
That quits this form to fill thy place.

So, parted from my grosser self,
'Tis easier to mount up to thee
O'er pine-topped crag, or rock-hewn shelf,
Or stretch of the blank sea;
And, soaring far from earth and night,
To follow to thy land of light!

And if I falter by the way
To kiss the dust where thou hast been;
Or if I weep—as well I may—
Still dost thou walk serene,
Thy spirit-eyes, that look not back,
Fixed, mute, upon God's shining track.

In yonder fields His hand hath sown
The beautiful doth stir thee still;
Undreamed by thee, unfelt, unknown
My quenchless human will:
Still wilt thou smile—and, smiling, pass,
Nor trace my shadow on the grass.

It may be that the soul of love
Shall smite thee with a tender sense
Of one who in thy light doth move,
Who may not yet go hence;
And shew thee, mid thine uncrushed flowers,
Light footprints such as once were ours.

So may I haunt thee—aye! till death
Crowns all: the spirit flies before.
The grave but claims the conquered breath;
Earth's empire is no more:
The soul of truth, unbarred by clay,
Leaps to the everlasting day!

E. L. H.

* There is, we ought perhaps to say, a recent mechanical invention adopted by this company, which will supersede entirely the application of the centrifugal force; but our light contributor is of opinion that he should only distract himself and confuse his readers by attempting to explain its principle.